B
B62216

MEMOIR

OF

BENJAMIN BISHOP

THE UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS
LIBRARY

From the collection of
Julius Doerner, Chicago
Purchased, 1918.

B

B622161

Inventory of the true Life,
hurt real and ideal.

Some true experience of the
Refiners fire kind of character
how wrought out [illegible]

$\frac{12-6'}{12\ 1/2\ 10\ 2}$ c/k

35 f

MEMOIR OF

BENJAMIN BISHOP

WITH

EXTRACTS FROM HIS LETTERS.

"GOD ONLY REQUIRES THE PRESENT MOMENT: AND THE RIGHT EMPLOYMENT OF THE PRESENT MOMENT PREPARES THE WAY FOR THE RIGHT EMPLOYMENT OF THE NEXT." P. S.

LONDON:
A. W. BENNETT, 5, BISHOPSGATE STREET WITHOUT. E.C.
GLOUCESTER: JOHN BELLOWS, STEAM PRESS.
1865.

JOHN BELLOWS,
STEAM PRESS, WESTGATE STREET,
GLOUCESTER.

B
B6221b1

Preface.

THE following simple memoranda, and extracts from letters of BENJAMIN BISHOP, are preserved to commemorate that grace, by which, amidst many outward vicissitudes and trials, through the baptism of the Spirit, and much mental conflict, he became the loving disciple, and humble follower of the meek and crucified Redeemer, endeavouring to serve Him with the whole heart.

Case
1 Mr 33

The Lord condescended graciously to honour His faithful servant abundantly with the incomes of heavenly peace and joy, so that, during the latter years of his life, living praises to his God and Saviour were often heard to resound in his lowly dwelling.

May the record and remembrance of these mercies stimulate many to a life of holiness, and entire dedication of soul.

R. R.

WELLINGHAM HOUSE.

703347

MEMOIR OF BENJAMIN BISHOP.

I WAS born in London in the Fifth Month, 1780, and at seven years of age was sent to Islington School. During this period I had at times desires of living in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Spirit, and in this, it was the earnest endeavour of our master J. Withers to encourage and instruct us. His love and care are fresh with me to this day. I left school at fourteen years of age, and was apprenticed to a Friend at Malton; where, there not being much business except on market days, I often read my Bible in the shop. Here I did not long remain, on account of a defect in my sight, but in my sixteenth year returned to my parents in London. Here I was exposed to the lowest company, but was mercifully preserved in innocency, and as I did not depart from the plain language, or alter my dress materially, my company was not much sought by these. The nature of our engagements rendered it out of our power to attend meetings for worship regularly, but my parents endeavoured to do their best, my mother often saying, 'No good can come from

neglecting meetings.' I do not recollect any deep religious impressions being received by me, while with my parents, only I was preserved in love and endeavoured to keep myself outwardly consistent.

"In 1797 I went to live with a Friend at Strood, in Kent, where I had to mingle with persons of various classes; and acting strictly in accordance with my principles, I believe I was the more respected; being assisted to behave with propriety, whilst preserved in faithfulness herein. The remembrance of the sweetness which at times covered my mind, is precious at this time. Oh! that our youth did more generally consider who it is that requires of us, as a people, the testimonies to plainness of speech, behaviour and apparel, and labour to uphold them in the savour of the Spirit; how greatly would it tend to keep them from many evils that are in the world, against which *these* are as a wall. Would that heads of families did more generally live day by day in the Lord's holy fear, that thereby they might train up those under their care in His nurture and admonition. I often had longings after a more certain knowledge of the teachings of the Spirit, but not getting deep enough, the old nature in me remained alive, and thus I was as the door on its hinges, going backwards and forwards, and getting no nearer; yet the Lord's watchful eye was over me, and preserved me, though I knew Him not as I might have known Him, had I walked more circumspectly in His fear. I took great delight in reading the Bible, and was very partial to the writings of Friends, and those of Fenelon, and often retired into a private apartment with my book. I well remember some of the evenings spent in the loft, and cannot but long that our youth were more careful

how they spend their first-day evenings. On one such, as I was sitting alone in the kitchen, a Friend came in to whom I was a stranger, and she to me. To my surprise she addressed me in an exceedingly encouraging manner, saying 'Thy prayers are heard, and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.' This was a favoured season, never to be forgotten, the remembrance of which draws tears from my eyes whilst writing.

"In the Seventh Month, 1803, I went into business on my own account, with the small capital of £33. Soon after which I was married. I inwardly requested of the Lord that He would favour us with His presence on our wedding day, and that I might be made fully sensible of it, which I would take as an evidence that He regarded the breathings of my spirit: and the meeting did appear to me to be a time of great favour."

Disappointment and deep trials were the lot of our dear friend in a pecuniary way, in the prosecution of his business, and in the bringing up and providing for his children. He suffered long and severely from an asthmatic complaint, and his eyesight, always defective, became gradually worse, until total blindness ensued. He was also much tried, at times, with mental depression. Naturally active, and very industrious, desiring to provide for his family without becoming burdensome to his friends, he tried in various ways to do so, frequently using exertions quite beyond his strength; but he was obliged eventually to relinquish the idea, and was a most grateful recipient of kindnesses of which he largely partook.

It may be instructive to notice a season of distress through which our dear friend passed in

connection with the sale of milk, in which he was at one time engaged. He had yielded to a temptation presented by the unwearied enemy of our soul's peace and well-being, to increase, as he thought, his means, by adding water to the milk, practising it for a short time; but was visited by inward judgments and conflicts of spirit which he thus feelingly describes:

"On one occasion of solemn waiting the language seemed uttered, 'Let Me be the Leader, and thou the follower; then will I bring thee through and over all.' Having long stifled the Witness for God in me, I knew not at first who it was that thus spake to me; but leaning to the impression it grew stronger and stronger, until I believed it was the Lord. And being now humbled by His Almighty chastening hand I entered into covenant with Him, and He gave me this rule to walk by:—'Whenever thou feels any weight or burden upon thy spirit, thou must not put it off as thou hast done, but let it have its full weight and place in thy mind, until a way is opened to thee in the quiet for thy relief.' It was unfolded to me that I must follow the pointings of the Light, and take all the consequences. This I fully understood. After this I went on from day to day, endeavouring to keep my mind as inwardly retired as I was capable of. At length it was brought to my remembrance that I had often felt uneasy about the practice I had allowed myself in, of putting water to the milk. I recurred to a time when one of my customers had said, 'Dost thou put water to thy milk?' To which, being unwilling to be humbled, I had replied, 'No!' This had been a burden to me at times, and now it settled upon me. And strong cries were raised that

I might be made clean in the Divine sight. I thought on my ways and turned to the Lord, and sought after a sufficient evidence from Him that I should be enabled to stand in the day of trial, when I should decline longer to follow so wrong a practice, and mine eye was to Him alone for help, having none on earth to whom I could open my troubles; for I had long rejected the counsel of my friends. As I was going to meeting one first-day morning, I was reminded from within to examine whether, if the sacrifice of not putting water in the milk was called for, I was prepared to make it? I said, 'I thought I was.'

"Now before this time I had trembled at attending meetings, feeling a dread of speaking with my friends when they were broken up; but on the occasion above alluded to I was favoured with such a calmness of mind, that I compared it to 'lying down beside the still waters,' (for I had long been a stranger to such,) in which quiet this prayer was breathed through my soul, 'Father glorify thy name.' And whilst I was meditating thereon, believing nothing but the reluctance of the creature would hinder this, a Friend stood up with these words, 'Speak to my people that they go forward,' adding, that He would take nothing from us that was worth our keeping. Another Friend enlarged on the deliverances and preservations experienced by Israel in the wilderness. Again the first minister rose, and revived the words, 'When thou passest through the waters, they shall not overflow thee, and through the flames, they shall not kindle upon thee.' I cannot describe what were my feelings under these testimonies, yet well knowing that it was a very formidable

enemy I was about to meet, I desired an evidence from within also, and the meeting broke up with this resolution on my mind; 'I will carry it home, and weigh it in the silence of all flesh.' As I was walking, the Witness queried of me, 'How dost thou know thou wilt be able to get into the silence of all flesh?' I was now not far from home, and another difficulty arose, How should I tell my wife? When the time came to carry the milk in to her, I simply said, 'Do not put any water to it.' 'Why not?' she asked: 'The milk will not hold out for thy customers without it.' I said, 'Because I do not wish it.' She put none, and I felt a peaceful satisfaction in serving my customers that afternoon; and in the evening earnestly desired an evidence from the Lord before morning, that this was His requiring, as this giving up would throw me behind with my cow-keeper. In the evening the Witness queried, 'Could I not save the money in my house-keeping?' I said, 'I thought not,' but He shewed me otherwise. After this, a night of wrestling and exercise followed,—Satan telling me it was impossible for me to serve so holy a Lord God, and that I should fall away. The Witness for God within me, replied, 'God only requires the present moment; and the right employment of the present moment prepares the way for the right employment of the next.' These things bring to my remembrance what I heard Thomas Scattergood express when I was young: 'The Lord will chalk out the way, and make it plain.'"

After a considerable time spent in the occupation of milk-seller and in other ways, he kept a Temperance Room, in which he was made serviceable to several of those who came to take coffee and pass

the evening hours at his fireside. Amongst whom were several young men from the Barracks. In the year 1841, we find an interesting account of the illness and death of one of these, W. Y., whom Benjamin Bishop frequently visited. He had been a musician in the Marine Band, Chatham Barracks, and had passed through some mental conflicts.

10th Month 5th, 1841. On Benjamin Bishop calling on W. Y. he found him much exhausted from a fit of coughing. B. B. remarked, "This is hard work, but it feels very pleasant to sit by thee again." When able to speak, W. Y. said, "I am very happy to see you." After a solemn pause, Benjamin Bishop said, "From the feelings of my mind, I believe I may utter the language, 'O Death! where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?' I would not flatter thee, but I feel that all is peace. I believe thy sins are forgiven, and that thou wilt be enabled to see it with clearness before thou goest. Do not be discouraged at the buffetings of the enemy and his temptations, even if it should be to believe what is wrong. It is no sin to be tempted.

> "'Ye feeble saints, fresh courage take,
> The clouds ye so much dread,
> Are big with mercy, and shall break
> In blessings on your head.'"

The invalid held Benjamin Bishop's hand during another solemn pause, after which he faintly, but distinctly said, "I feel so happy—I feel so happy;" his countenance at the same time bespeaking the peace of his mind. Benjamin Bishop said, "I do not seem to have much to communicate; there is a feeling which is beyond words."

At a later period, he visited an elder brother of W. Y., under similar circumstances, who had plunged even more deeply into wickedness. He appeared to have been followed by strong convictions from season to season; partial reforms had been succeeded by even more flagrant sins, when, drawing near the solemn close he was again most mercifully visited, and his sins placed as in fearful array against him; and it was under feelings of deep remorse that he expressed an anxious desire to see Benjamin Bishop. With difficulty he reached the abode of the invalid who received him thankfully. He was suffering mentally and bodily, and was affectionately encouraged to bear the rod, and to consider the deep sense of sin he then had as a renewed token of his Saviour's love; and a hope was expressed that he would soon see better days. This hope was most mercifully realized; he became calm and peaceful, and seemed favoured with a clear evidence that his sins had passed before-hand to judgment. He said, "O! I have had such a night, much better than sleep." A great alteration was observed to take place in his manner; from being high and irritable he became gentle and quiet, so that it was a privilege to be with him.

It was after a long time of deep exercise, that Benjamin Bishop believed himself called to engage in the work of the ministry; and his service herein being acceptable, he was recorded a Minister in the Eleventh Month, 1841. He never travelled in that capacity, but not long after his acknowledgment requested liberty to hold a public meeting with the poor of his own neighbourhood, especially for those engaged in fishing. In the Eighth Month, 1845, another minute was granted, liberating him to visit his poor neighbours

in their own houses, in which he was united by Joseph Ashby Gillett. This unlooked-for help he viewed as an especial mark of Divine favour, and condescension to his low estate. The accomplishment of this service afforded much peace to his exercised mind, and there is cause thankfully to believe that the labour of love was blessed to some of the objects of his care and interest. He sympathised deeply and tenderly with the poor around him, knowing from experience many of their privations; he was especially desirous to promote their religious welfare, and that they might be directed to the sure source of consolation, which had been his support under all his varied trials.

In the year 1846 he was called on to resign his beloved wife. Great was his consolation under this close bereavement, in the belief that his loss was her eternal gain. After her removal he continued to reside with the family whose dwelling they had shared, and where he was kindly cared for until his death. To some members of it there is reason to believe he was made an instrument of good in the Lord's hand: he sometimes remarked, "We have lived together in much love." The last few years of his life Benjamin Bishop was afflicted with deafness; this privation he keenly felt at times, as it interrupted that converse which he enjoyed to maintain with his friends. In allusion to this he remarked, "It feels very solemn to be so shut out from all communication with the world." To a late period of his life, his attendance of meetings was exemplary. His ministerial engagements were deeply instructive, and his approaches to the Throne of Grace in supplication were marked by much solemnity and fervour. It was his delight to dwell on the things of Christ's kingdom, and to hand

to those around him of that heavenly food of which he was partaking. His path to heaven lay through much tribulation, but in proportion to the heat of the furnace did the gold shine brightly, his firm faith in his God being united to deep humility.

In the Eleventh Month, 1853;—he wrote to a Friend, "I do not see when I shall be able to get out to meeting, because of my pain, which to the praise of the glory of His grace is all I have to bear. Tell me, my dear friend, if I am deceiving myself. It is a rule given me to walk by, that when I feel peace, I may go in peace."

The following are some of the expressions of Benjamin Bishop during his last illness:

"My dear friends, now let us sit in solemn silence." After a pause, "I feel as though I could not depart in peace without telling you of the love I feel for all my friends, those in our religious Society, and out of the Society, who are looking to Christ. O the love of God is inconceivable! May you give up body, soul, and spirit, into His hands. While the fleshly lusts and desires remain there will be trouble, but in the meekness and gentleness of the Lamb there is peace." On allusion being made to the triumphant close of a dear friend, his countenance beamed with animation, and he forcibly exclaimed, "O the precious Spirit! I am favoured to feel the same will be my experience, if I maintain the watch. I never before so fully realized the awfulness of such a state. I can say no pain of body." One present observed, "I think none of mind." "I can say so too," he added, "but I have nothing to spare,—not a moment to spare." After another pause he took off his cap, and seemed engaged in solemn prayer and praises. He distinctly said,

"Thou hast taught me to pray that Thy holy will may be done by me, in me, and through me." Soon after, "'Expressive silence muse his praise,' I have not words to do it. I thank thee, O God, that Thou didst not take me until that which was to be done in me is perfected." A friend bidding him farewell, he said, "My dear friend I *am* faring well.—Go, and may the Lord go with thee." Speaking of the abounding love which he felt towards his friends everywhere, he added, "I want us to come into the fellowship of the Father and the Son, and one with another. They who will not take up the cross to their own will, in the way in which it is made manifest, cannot be the children of God, but they that are willing to die on the cross to their own will, are His children. O the love, joy and peace which I feel."

12th Month 7th, 1854.—"My heart seems all love, I cannot express it in words. It is right for us to labour for the bread of life, but when that is obtained for which we have laboured, it ceases, and we have only to watch and wait. And that is my state; I am waiting till the porter opens the door; but the watch must be maintained or the enemy will pollute the covering of my spirit; but Christ is stronger than he is, and I am much favoured with strength to withstand him."

12th Month 18th, 1854.—He seemed so raised in spirit that much flowed from him in lively and beautiful language, but so rapidly that little could be retained but the precious savour which accompanied it, and rested on the minds of those who felt it a favour to sit by him and partake thereof. One of his expressions at that time was, "It was a tempestuous day, the day of my baptism into his love."

Remarking that it was a trying time for the exercised members of our religious Society who were labourers for the cause of Truth on earth, the cause of Christ, he added, "There must be a seeking after the oneness of His Spirit. The time will come to experience a larger measure of this, if they keep waiting. You that see eye to eye, if only as the two or three, who feel for the Church of Christ, get close together, and there will be an increase. 'Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together, whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel.'"

A few days before his death he sent a message to his friends, "Give my dear love to them, and tell them the enemy is very busy, but my dear Saviour is near."

From this time his strength gradually declined, and his peaceful spirit was gently released from its afflicted tabernacle, to be gathered as we reverently trust, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born which are written in heaven.

Nearly his last words were, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

Extracts from his Letters.

I.

To ———

10th month 9th, 1840.

There is One "that shutteth, and no man openeth; and openeth, and no man shutteth:" and truly it is a precious thing rightly to discern when to abide in our tents, and when to journey forward. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life;" but in the Life Himself there is no straitness, but fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore. Your offerings were, I believe, a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour unto God. Ye have refreshed my spirit; may the dew of heaven rest upon you, the dew which descended upon the mountains of Zion, where the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, and blessed be His glorious name for ever. He is gathering into one spirit those who have made covenant with Him by sacrifice. He will judge His people by His own eternal Spirit, and before His power the sinners in Zion will be afraid, and fearfulness will surprise the hypocrites: but peace shall be upon Israel.

II.

To J. AND S. R.

1840.

Those who feel this holy union and communion between God and our souls and one with another, whether in our meetings or in our closets when no outward eye perceives us, belong, I believe, to that holy city which John saw, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I believe there are many in this kingdom, unknown by face to each other, under the preparing hand of the Lord; and for these, the living groan and travail in spirit, that Christ may be formed in them. There is great encouragement for our fathers and mothers to wrestle for the blessing, for it is written of our holy Founder, "He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied." And as with our Lord, so with His servants according to their measure, for Christ has spoken it, "he that is perfect, shall be as his Lord." I want to see all the Lord's servants and hand-maidens exceedingly joyful in all their tribulations: for why are these baptized unto death? Is it not that they through the power of an endless life, should raise the dead, that when our Lord cometh to meet us, we should through Him, live together in Him? Now I feel as a child, and I speak as a child, that I may be instructed. I do not want to see the Lord's baptized servants exempted from, or lifted up above suffering. I believe our baptisms must be in proportion to the glory that is to follow. I began this without a single sentence before me, only my mind felt overpressed with love, and I have simply followed the drawings of my mind. It may seem to you as though I was full and in need

of nothing: this, in a pecuniary sense, is somewhat true; but in the inward, it is quite the reverse, being, I was going to write, in the want of all things, and I live by faith, and not by sight; and I feel my strength is to be still. I sometimes call to mind the words which dropped from the lips of dear G. K., in his late visit, "I know thy works, and thy tribulation, and thy poverty;" and this is my consolation, the Lord knoweth me, altogether as I am.

——o——

III.

To ————

1st month, 1841.

True it is there is a being cast down, but not forsaken; and blest are they who, in many tribulations, are enabled to stand as on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. We must be brought into tribulations before we can come out of them; and seeing that through many tribulations we enter the kingdom, ought we not rather to rejoice, when our faith and patience are put to the test, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for us, who hath endured, and knoweth how to deliver the tempted.

——o——

IV.

To ————

4th month, 1841.

Times and seasons are not at our command. The winds blow when and where they are sent of God. Yesterday, as I was about retiring to rest, thinking my labours of love were finished for a little season, the ear of my soul caught the sound of thy name,

and it remains with me as a dew from the Lord; and believing it is the will of our Heavenly Father, that every empty vessel in His house should be filled whilst the oil of love with faith is flowing, I herewith send thee such as I have. I have had whilst writing, a call from ——. Truly the countenance of a faithful friend is as a brook by the way. The blind man has written *countenance*, but I mean, the voice, in the love and sweetness of Christ. It is written, "precious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of His saints;" and it may be said, precious in the eyes of the upright, are the lives of the Lord's saints. How precious then is our God, our adorable Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who filleth all, both Church triumphant and Church militant! His saints may praise Him, and His ministers declare the glorious majesty of His kingdom in His Spirit, the power of which, their eyes have seen, and their hands handled.

——o——

V.

To W. B.

7th month 3rd, 1841.

My dear Friend.—Jesus Christ, the great and holy Head of the Church, our High Priest and Intercessor, who is to be heard in all things, is everywhere present with His children. His eye beholdeth their most inward thought, and His ear is open unto their cry. "His ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts than our thoughts." It is written of Him, "I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment, to cause them that love me to inherit substance, and I will fill their treasures;" and, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of

heaven." There is in this kingdom of heaven which Christ is setting up in the hearts of His obedient children, power to believe, power to suffer, power to love, and power to hate; and as the eye of the mind is kept singly unto the glory of God, watching unto prayer for the renewing of the Holy Ghost, there can no evil befall them, for these dwelling in the "secret place of the Most High, are always under the shadow of the Almighty." As we "walk in the light, as He is in the light,"—that is, as we are obedient unto the manifestations of the Light of Christ in the secret of our souls,—"we have fellowship one with another," and "we rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep;" and thou being quickened unto these things that appertain unto life and salvation by Christ Jesus, and a sufferer for His name, art the object of our sympathy, and prayers that God in the riches of His love and grace may sanctify thy whole body, soul and spirit, and make thee in all things comformable unto His holy and ever blessed will, that His name may be glorified. Thou hast "the anointing" within thee, and needest not that any man should teach thee, for the same anointing will teach thee all things, and is the Truth and no lie, and as it has taught thee, so abide in Him.

Thy sincere Friend,

BENJAMIN BISHOP.

——o——

VI.

To ——

8th month, 1841.

My love flows in streams more precious than life; a love which I believe to be a foretaste of those eternal joys laid up in heaven for the righteous, who,

through faith and patience shall be accounted worthy to inherit the promises, when these tabernacles of clay are dissolved. Through the kindness of our friends we stand in need of no one thing that I know of, except more watchfulness and greater dedication of heart, to walk more circumspectly day by day before the Lord, that we may glorify Him, and answer the end of our creation. I want all mankind the world over, to follow the same rule, and mind the same thing, and the same God would give peace and content unto every man in the station in which His unerring wisdom hath placed him. May the Lord hasten that day!

——o——

VII.

THE FOLLOWING LETTER WAS ADDRESSED TO A POOR, INFIRM, AND NEARLY BLIND MAN.

I am very poor, but have great cause to be thankful, having much more than I deserve, even outwardly as well as inwardly, which I believe is thy blessed experience also. In trials of my faith toward our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and afflictions of the body, I abound, as also I apprehend thou dost; and what shall we say to these things? Can we do better than honestly examine ourselves, whether these light afflictions which are but for a moment compared with eternity, are working the end designed, viz.:— that we should rejoice in and over them, under an humbling sense of what our holy Redeemer suffered for us? There will be tribulations, for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; whence it is that they who enter into life

eternal, come out of great tribulation. They do not sink down into despair under them, but they rise above them and get the victory over them, through faith in Him who hath loved us, and seen meet to call us to virtue, and to glory, through and over all the power of the enemy, in whatever shape he may come. Thus it is that in the world we have a conflict; but as Christ exhorted, "Be of good cheer," so let us, dear friend, be of good cheer, and number some of our blessings, for they are too numerous to be told, and all of them are the gift of God. The apostle Paul admonishes us to covet earnestly the best gifts, and I know none better than a grateful heart. It is gratitude which makes the host of heaven sing redeeming love and grace; without gratitude on earth the greatest blessings are turned into curses, for they aggravate our guilt; but he that is grateful for all that he enjoys is like the earth that receives blessings from God, spreading fragrance all around, yielding "bread to the eater, and seed to the sower." In suffering it gives thanks, because thereby our love in all His dispensations is proved, evincing that whatever afflictions we patiently endure in remembrance of the sufferings of our ever blessed Saviour, will work for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," while we look not at the things which are seen, and are temporal, but at the things which are not seen, and are eternal. Oh! the wonderful love of God in sending His beloved Son into the world to die for our sins, to heal us by His stripes, and to give us grace, which, if received in faith, prepares all that obey its teachings for an admission into those glorious mansions, where "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

Visible things are passing away from us, and we ourselves with them; let our hearts therefore be in heaven, then no afflictions will be able to separate us from the love of God, and communion with Him through the Holy Spirit. Our release from the cares of life, owing to blindness, gives us many opportunities to seek after this, and I rejoice in believing it is the desire of thy heart to do so. Unto the grace of God and to His blessing I commend thee with my own soul, and in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ I affectionately bid thee farewell, and subscribe myself,

Thy Christian Friend,

BENJAMIN BISHOP.

———o———

VIII.

To Lord Hill, on behalf of W. B.

9th month 30th, 1841.

It is in pure love to the authorities in power that I now address our rulers on behalf of private W. B., of the 3rd Regiment of Infantry, whose case has already been laid before you, and who is now a sufferer for conscience sake towards God, under your hand, on board the *Indian* sloop ship, bound for Calcutta, from whence he is to be forwarded to the regiment he enlisted into; when he must, according to the instructions sent unto our friends by order of Lord Hill, inevitably feel the consequence of what is considered in the eye of military law, the heinous crime of insubordination. It is "righteousness that exalteth a nation;" and when the people shall turn from their iniquities, and love the Lord Jesus Christ,

the Lamb of God and Prince of Peace, with all their hearts, and their neighbours as themselves, then they "shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, and learn war no more." And my heart's desire and prayer to God for our nation is, that she may not be the promoter of the sufferings of the human family, but an instrument in the Lord's hand for the promulgation of the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which proclaims "glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will towards men:" and this is an individual work between God and our souls, who hath spoken by his prophet Jeremiah, "I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and bring you to Zion."

In order that Lord Hill and the authorities in power may be rightly informed in this very important case, it feels a duty incumbent on me meekly to present you with a memorial thereof, lest through ignorance you should be found even to fight against God. Sir William Wane, Commandant of Chatham Garrison, has supposed that our friends were the promoters, if not the instigators, of private W. B's. insubordination to the military law. If this is true, I am the man: but the matter is not exactly so. It is true I have encouraged him to obey God rather than man, and this is no more than one of the officers did when W. B. put the plain question to him, who replied, "Obey God by all means." And Sir William Wane himself has borne witness of him, that "this W. B. will do unto the laying down of his life." And O! that our nation may not have to bear the guilt of a Martyr's blood through your hands. But I am not the instigator of W. B's insubordination, for this thing is of God. W. B. came with scruples of con-

science on his mind, and as he opened them to me, I advised him according to the wisdom given unto me at the time, how to obtain that peace which "the world can neither give nor take away." And this I have further to say, that we who are believers in Christ Jesus as the Saviour of the soul, are soldiers as well as you. The Prince of Peace, the Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, is our Law-giver, and our Judge, before whom all armies and fleets, with all their glory, power and might, are but as the drop of a bucket, and from Him we have a law, and by His law we ought meekly and patiently to suffer, even unto death, whatever men are permitted to do unto us. May the King immortal, the only wise God our Saviour, guide you by His counsels, and gently lead you from war and bloodshed, step by step, until He make you the instruments in His hand for the promotion of peace and happiness throughout the whole universe. So desireth, and so prayeth,

Your real Christian Friend,
BENJAMIN BISHOP.

——o——

IX.

To ————

7th month, 1842.

Thou, my beloved Friend, hast for some time felt near my heart, and I do desire according to my measure, to be thy companion in the deeps. Well, suppose we are in the deeps, with the weeds wrapped around our heads, and the earth with her bars about us, the Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty floods which

Satan is casting out of his mouth to destroy us, and He will with the temptation make a way for our escape. Then we will cast our anchor of hope, in faith on the Lord Jesus, and we shall ride out every storm; and if at last we get safe on shore in the realms of eternal peace and blessedness, though it be on broken pieces of the ship with the loss of all but our lives, it will be enough. If at any time thou feel thy mind so drawn, a few lines from thee in the savour of Life will be very precious to me, though it be by way of correction, for "to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet." Our beloved will not always be unto us as a fountain sealed, a spring shut up: after He has tried us, and we abide faithful, He will bring us forth as gold. And it ariseth in me to say unto thee in the fear of the Lord, thou hast compassed this mountain long enough. "Loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion, for great is the Holy One in the midst of thee." "His greatness is unsearchable, and His ways past finding out," but they are revealed unto babes and sucklings. My love flows to your whole circle. May we all be seeking day by day to be found of our Lord, walkers in the New Jerusalem, the Holy City, whose inhabitants see each other in the Light, and feel each other in the Life of the Lamb, and through Him, and with Him, reign on the earth, over all blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the voice of words, and over death and hell itself. Is it not time, my dear friend, to awake as out of sleep, to put on thy beautiful garments and thy strength, and to come forth in meekness and love, and mount upwards? Is it not written, "Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver,

and her feathers with yellow gold?" Thou wilt say, this can only be done through the Refiner with His fining pot, and His furnace. True, but we are apt to complain,—to remember God, His greatness, and His holiness, and be troubled. But let our spirits make diligent search. "Will the Lord cast off for ever; will He be favourable no more?" Let us remember the years of the right hand of the Most High; for if, whilst we were sinners, Christ died for us, how much more will He not with Him freely give us all things? And who, and what shall separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord? What though our walls are broken down, and our gates consumed with fire; what though there is much rubbish, and the strength of the burden-bearers of many in Judah is decayed, and the nobles put not their hand to the work, yet in the name of the Lord our God, let us arise and do that which our hand findeth to do. Remember Nehemiah, thank God, and take courage; for "do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?"

——o——

X.

To ————

Strood, 7th month, 1842.

I rejoice to suffer with the suffering seed of Christ, wrestling for the coming and establishment of His kingdom in the heart of man. But thanks be unto the Lord, glorious things are still spoken of the City of God, her counsellors have not all vanished; yea, the shout of a King is still to be heard in the midst of her, and through the strength and majesty of her God, Truth will yet spring up out of the earth, and

righteousness look down from heaven. The Pearl is worth digging deep after, the crown is worth suffering for, and when the set time is come for the Lord to favour Zion, she will break forth on the right hand and on the left, and the hand of the Lord will be known towards His servants, and His indignation towards His enemies. And Oh! my dear friend, let us remember each other in our bonds, in whatever way we may be bound, for "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." It is as the dew upon the hill which the Lord hath blessed,—as the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.

——o——

XI.

To ————

21st of 8th month, 1842.

I feel greatly obliged to thee for thine, it being my soul's delight to feel a perfect oneness of mind and judgment in things that appertain to life and godliness, through the mediation, sacrifice, and the cleansing baptizing power of the Holy Spirit. I feel much inclined freely to communicate to thee the way I take to inherit eternal life, through the faith of the operation of God in the soul of man, by which thou wilt judge for thyself whether we are so far agreed that we can walk together towards that "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." I am a very little child, and I think as a child, and consider myself now speaking to a child, of what I am learning in the school of Christ, and I desire to

be as brief as I can. When I was young I girded myself, and went whithersoever I would, so far as my power and self restraint, through shame, would permit. I think I can, with as much propriety as Agar, say, "Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man." I did not learn heavenly wisdom, therefore could not have the knowledge of the holy: but I was a Saul in my own estimation, often head and shoulders above many, and got upon the mountains of Gilboa, where there is to be "neither dew, nor rain, nor fields of offerings." Here, my enemies spoiled me, yet my life was still whole in me, and anguish was upon me, because I was so fallen that I could not do as I listed any longer: but through adorable mercy I was still spared. And after this as I was travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho I fell among thieves, who wounded me, and stripped me, and left me half dead; and here I must have perished, had not one come whom I knew not, and spake comfortably to me, lifting me up and carrying me to an inn, where I afterwards found he had given charge concerning me. At this inn I was taken good care of; and when my benefactor came again, he shewed me that I had procured these things unto myself, and he told me that He was the Almighty God: and if I would suffer Him to be the Leader and I the follower, He would bring me through and over all. And this covenant being entered into between us, He shewed me the way wherein I must walk, and how to know Him from all deceivers. He taught me also to pull off my shoes when I was upon holy ground, and gave me meat, for He said, the journey was too great for me; and He bade me to get into the Rock and hide myself, for hell from beneath

was moved to meet me at my coming. And when He suffered the power of darkness to overtake me, then He led me about and instructed me, and guided me with his eye, so that I could say in a good degree with Job, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, so that I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." And this Scripture was strongly impressed on my mind, "No man shall see God, and live." And I was given clearly to see, the way of life was through the gates of death; and deep were my baptisms, and awful the judgments I had to pass through. Yet no tongue can utter, nor pen describe the gracious visitations of His love, which were from time to time vouchsafed according as he saw need, sweetening every bitter cup, and strengthening me to bear the purifying fire necessary for me to pass through for my refinement. And now with Nebuchnezzar, "I do extol and honour and praise the King of Heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment, and those that walk in pride He is able to abase."

Now with regard to learning to read the raised type I am at a loss. I feel the privation, but believe I must learn "to be content with such things as I have," for it is written, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;" and I am persuaded that they who possess God, possess the substance of all things.

God is love, and the Holy Scriptures are the fruit of His love, and man is the work of His hands; and Jesus Christ of whom the Scriptures testify is the Mediator between God and man; and the Holy Spirit is the grace, wisdom, and power of Christ, which worketh out in man our reconciliation with God. As God by Christ Jesus created the outward heaven and

the earth, so will God by Christ Jesus, create in man the new heaven and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

And this one thing I endeavour to do,—look up to Him through the help of the Holy Spirit, for my daily bread, even that bread which yieldeth Eternal life, and thus I do, imperfectly as I do, labour to keep the mind always susceptible of the smallest appearings of the love of God, that I may discern whether it is by way of reproof, correction, or instruction on my own account, or to lead into a travail of soul on account of others; and this is a source of constant employment for my time.

Precious indeed are the declarations and testimonies of the love of God, when given forth in His Power and Spirit; but still more precious is the eating and drinking thereof in His internal presence in our souls: and they that are thirsting after these things do pray that His kingdom may come and His will be done. But sometimes our Lord taketh a long journey and we become very poor and needy, and then it is good for us to give ourselves up to reading and meditation, to watchfulness and prayer; for "we live by faith and not by sight." And so it is, I do not see why I should be thus led, but in the stillness and quiet, there often ariseth something like unto dew from the Lord; and when I feel my heart enlarged and drawn here and there, I empty myself, as way opens, and then I feel refreshed.

With child-like simplicity, and I trust, godly sincerity, I desire to be thy sympathising friend,

BENJAMIN BISHOP.

[Note.—B. B. eventually learned the raised type, and much enjoyed the perusal of the Scriptures through this means.]

XII.

To ———

Strood, 31st of 8th month, 1842.

My dear friend.—It has been repeatedly on my mind since the Yearly Meeting to send thee a token of my gratitude, and also a manifestation of my sympathy with thee under thy trials of faith, and exercise of patience in a travail of soul for the prosperity of our highly favoured and once dignified Society, that her righteousness may go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth, and that she may possess the gates of all her enemies, that Zion's King may reign over all, and her princes rule in judgment. But from so doing I have felt discouraged on account of my unworthiness and insufficiency; but as the thing still continues with me, I have considered that I am sufficient to write the truth, and that the precious Truth must be brought into dominion over all, through Jesus Christ our Lord, and that I shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven through my worthiness: therefore leaving judgment unto Him who only judgeth righteously, I proceed.

I consider great responsibility rests upon me for the many favours conferred upon me by our dear friends, and for placing us above the want of any temporal good thing which our state requires. This calls for a daily deep dwelling with the Life, that through the light and power thereof I may be preserved out of all evil, that the end for which these favours are bestowed may not be frustrated: and this leads me to make a remark or two on my belief of the power of religion on the mind in respect to temporals.

The primitive Christians had all things common: and as pure undefiled religion prevails in the hearts of men, so must covetousness, pride, cruelty and oppression cease out of the earth, on the part of those who have power; and on the part of the poor and weak there will be truth, fidelity, industry, economy, gratitude and love; and God will supply every man's need both temporally and spiritually, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus, in whom the fulness dwells. But every man in his own order or proper station. Princes will rule with justice; the rich will not overbear; nor the poor defraud; and the one will be a blessing to the other; and God will give the people pastors according to His own heart, truth will spring up out of the earth, and righteousness look down from heaven: the zeal of the Lord will perform this. This is my faith, and for this is the travail of my soul; and woe, woe, woe, unto the inhabitants of the earth when God ariseth to judge the secrets of men's hearts by Christ Jesus, and to plead with all flesh by His fire and sword. And I do believe the time is at hand, if not already come, when the sinners in Zion will be made afraid, and fearfulness surprise the hypocrites: and O that the people may become Quakers indeed, before the things that belong to their peace be hid from their eyes! And now, my dear friend, many and deep are the exercises of my mind on the state of our poor Society, and on the state of the unchristianity of the professed Christian world, and because of the great wickedness and oppression that is in the earth. Many are the secret mourners because of these things; and methinks I see the hand of the Lord bringing about a work in the earth, that whosoever heareth

thereof both his ears shall tingle. Then shall they that be wise shine as the brightness of the firmament, the oil of joy shall be given them for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; and the hand of the Lord shall be known towards His servants, and His indignation towards His enemies, as it is written, "Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him;" for the kingdom must become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ, which first must be known *in* man before it will shine through him. And O that men would suffer the Witness for God to arise within them: how soon would He make them that hate Him flee before Him!

With my wife and self's united dear love, thine very affectionately,

BENJAMIN BISHOP.

——o——

XIII.

To ————

9th month, 1842.

While desiring to comfort my friends with that comfort wherewith I myself am comforted of God, yet I believe if we take the gold and silver vessels out of the house of the Lord, and drink wine out of them at our own pleasure, when we are weighed in the balances of the sanctuary we shall be found wanting. O how sweetly and how safely doth the camp of the Lord move forward through the wilderness of this world, when the Pillar of Fire is their Guide and Guard by night, and the Cloudy Pillar their covering

by day, resting in their tents when that rests upon them, and journeying forwards when it is taken off the Tabernacle and goeth before them.

——o——

XIV.

To ————

25th of 12th month, 1842.

My dear Friend,—I need not make any apology for not sooner acknowledging the receipt of thy humbling epistle of love and unity, neither need I write in commendation of it, for I believe our heavenly Father hath sealed His approbation thereof on thy spirit. My heart unites with every sentence it contains. Thus far it appears we are baptized by one Spirit into one body, both seeing with the same eye, and mourning as with one heart, crying with one voice in the words of William Penn in his prayer, put at the end of his "No Cross, No Crown." *

May the Lord in His adorable mercy purely purge from us, as a people, all filthiness, both from flesh and spirit, and restore unto us judges as at the first, and counsellors as at the beginning; that our walls may be rebuilt, our gates set up, and our holy and beautiful temple, even the Life and Light of the Lord God and the Lamb, reared up in the sight of all nations.

* "O LORD GOD! thou lovest holiness, and purity is thy delight in the earth. Wherefore, I pray thee make an end of sin, and finish transgression, and bring in thy everlasting righteousness to the souls of men: that thy poor creation may be delivered from the bondage it groans under, and the earth enjoy her sabbath again; that thy great name may be lifted up in all nations, and thy salvation renowned to the ends of the world. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever. AMEN."

And we believe there are many yet among us baptized by the one Spirit into this one body, perfectly joined together in one mind and judgment. And seeing that their life is eternal, their light clear, the law of their God perfect, His testimonies sure, His commandments pure, His fear clean, enduring for ever, and His judgments true and righteous altogether, and the Lord's fire and furnace with them,—is it not time for these to arise and change their prison garments, that they may stand prepared to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes, that the scripture may be fulfilled, "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to convince all that are ungodly of all their ungodly deeds, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him;" and that Zion may be redeemed with judgment, and her converts by righteousness, which is of faith? But we are frail, weak in faith, and encompassed with many infirmities, and our enemies lively and strong! "Oh! that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night," because of the oppression of the enemy! And if weeping in secret was the only sacrifice the Lord was requiring of me, I believe my heart could say, "Thy will be done." But when I apprehend myself called to arise, anoint the shield, and prepare for battle, I feel the weakest of the weak, and like the worm, I would creep out of sight. Yet this one thing cheers me, that if any good is done by such a poor weak creature as I, it must be evident it is not I that do it, but the grace of God in me; and I am fully persuaded that as Christ is seeking one so unworthy as I, he is seeking all, and there is a cry raised within me, "What shall I render unto thee for all thy benefits?"

And there is nothing better for such as these than to drink the cup which the Lord is handing to them, whether it be to suffer or to reign, calling upon His most holy name. I believe that seeing many among us are making excuses, the servants will be sent not only to the lanes and streets, but unto the highways and hedges, for Jesus will not rest until His house is filled. . . . . .

Thy sympathising and indebted Friend,

BENJAMIN BISHOP.

—o—

XV.

To———

1843.

Thy last salutary epistle has quickened me in looking more diligently to my own heart to see that it be rooted and grounded in the love of God, and in that faith which comes by Jesus Christ. I speak to my own shame, knowing little more than my sins having been forgiven me for His name's sake. It is now full thirty years since the Lord fully made Himself known unto me by His judgments, in ever adorable mercy, and alas! where am I at this day! But this one thing I have, I do love them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and our precious Lord tells me that I cannot love these without loving Him. But the question with me is, where are the fruits of my love? I both see and feel there is an enemy at my heart, and I have great fears within, so that when fightings are without, I love to creep into some hole out of sight, saying as some others do, this and that are too weighty for me.

I believe that there are very many in our Society that love our Lord Jesus Christ in part, but are not made perfect in love because of fear; and many of these I believe are falling away from the Truth, because they fear the wrath of the enemy, not having submitted themselves unto the baptism of Him who teaches us whom to fear. And many I believe there are preserved among us, and reserved for a time nigh at the door, that fear to show themselves on the Lord's side through looking at their own weakness, who are suffering for want of fathers and mothers to lead them onwards as they themselves follow Christ. Ah! my dear friend, doth not the Lord hear the groanings of these prisoners of hope? and in His own time will He not arise for these, if they look unto Him, with healing in His wings, and enable them to declare the glory of the Lord in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem?

It is very clearly seen by the eye, that is singly directed to the glory of God and happiness of man, that all the divisions among the different societies of professors of Christianity are out of the life of Christ. And it is also evident by the same eye, that all the wretchedness, misery, and want among the poor, and all the shakings that are now working in the state and the commercial world, are the fault of men's alienation from the love of God, and from the power of His Christ. And by the same way that man has gone out from the paradise of God, by the same he only can return.

God sent His Son into the world to save the world, but man will not bear Christ's yoke, and deny himself, and take up his cross, no not though He died for us, and made an atonement for the sins of the whole

world, and is now sending His Holy Spirit into our hearts, giving gifts to every one severally as He will. And from the days of the apostles down to this our day, how many are the precious promises fulfilled in the experience of those that have believed according to the measure of grace given unto them, and received Christ in the way of His coming. We have testimonies from the statesman down to the negro-slave, that in Christ Jesus there is no want of any good thing.

Every man and every church will be judged according to that which Christ hath made manifest *in* them, and among them by his faithful servants. And is not the Lord now calling, "Whom shall I send and who will go for us." But I doubt whether the Lord's time is yet fully come.

It was when I was reading and meditating on the eighth chapter of Revelation that I felt drawings to write thee. We see that it was when there was silence in heaven, that John saw the seven angels, which stood before God, and seven trumpets given unto them; but we do not read of their moving from before God, until the angel at the altar offered much incense with the prayers of all saints; and when the smoke of the incense ascended up before God, then the angel took fire from off the altar, and cast it upon the earth, and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake, and then, and not till then, the seven angels prepared themselves to sound. Surely here is deep instruction for all the earth to keep silence before God, until He ariseth to plead the cause of His poor, and to make Mount Zion the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth.

And now, my dear friend, sing praises, sing praises unto our God that dwelleth in Zion, declare His doings unto the people, make mention that His name is far exalted above all gods! In that love that many waters cannot quench, I affectionately bid thee farewell. Be of good comfort, saith thy unworthy Friend,

BENJAMIN BISHOP.

—o—

XVI.

To ———

1844.

G. Fox, in a testimony that was sealed and opened after his death, writes thus, "Friends, remember that all your meetings, both men's and women's, were set up by the Spirit, wisdom and power of God, and by it they only can be established;" and he adds, "And ye do know that in them ye have felt His living refreshing presence to be amongst you." And I remember William Dewsbury's testimony, "I sat down among them in silence, for they had no need of words." But now the Life and Power is so low in our meetings that words at times appear almost useless; for if they will not hear Christ within them, how can they hear His ministers that are determined to know nothing in our meetings but Christ and Him crucified!

This declension hath not happened unto us through any slackness of the love of God, nor from any want of power in Christ to redeem, but through our departing from our first love; and if we refuse to return, the

Lord will remove our candlestick out of its place; I mourn on the one hand, and rejoice on the other. I mourn because of the hardness of men's hearts, and for the woes they bring upon themselves through unbelief, and I rejoice in the mercy and forbearance of God, being assured that He will make all things work together unto His own glory, and if any perish, their destruction will be of themselves. Oh! what breaches there are in our holy and beautiful house of prayer, wherein our fathers in the Truth praised God! I fear that the drawings and baptisms of the Lord's Holy Spirit are becoming as a byeword and reproach to many in our Society, whilst I rejoicingly believe faith in Christ *within*, as our hope of glory, is increasing among other professors.

My health has of late been very nicely, but my hearing has again become very hard. Through the kindnesses of dear friends all my wants are richly supplied; and above all I am favoured with great peace within. With fervent desires that the Lord may bless thee every way, I am thy grateful friend,

BENJAMIN BISHOP.

——o——

XVII.

To ————

1844.

My dear Friends.—I incline to pay you a visit in this way to enquire of your health, your prosperity, and your peace, for my heart is with you, and strong are my desires that the Lord may bless you with

His inward presence, which is better than all things from without, and that He may sustain and bear up under all your discouragements, trials and temptations. Remember my dear friends, the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, but unto them who, through faith and patience, endure unto the end, holding fast their confidence, calling upon Jesus when their hearts are overwhelmed. Though His presence is more dear to you than all beside, what a crowd of hindering things are in the way; were it not that Jesus lifts up a standard against the enemy, when he comes in like a flood, we should be all carried away with his temptations; but God giveth more grace, and bindeth the force of the floods which proceed out of the dragon's mouth, with "Hitherto shalt thou come and no further." Oh how high and lofty are the blasts of the terrible one against our wall, but remember the promise and exhortation, "I will fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." I know not how it is with you my dear friends, but thus my mind has felt drawn towards you, since I sat down to write. Few perhaps have had to drink more of the dregs of the cup of the Lord's anger than I have, for my rebellion against the clear shining of His holy Light, and few perhaps have had more cause to speak well of His name. I am not ignorant of the snares and temptations of the wicked one, neither am I a stranger to the judgments and mercies of God, and I would encourage every weary traveller to hold on his way, for "God is love."

I miss you very much, yet in heart you are still with me. Your sincere Friend,

BENJAMIN BISHOP.

XVIII.

To ———

1844.

My dear Friend.—Sweet is the remembrance of our close friendship in days that are past; sweet it is still to love, and it will ever remain to be in the endless ages of eternity, if we love one another, because "God is love." Thy letter was a welcome token of thy remembrance, and the information of your dear invalid charge pleasant, and now may I conclude your winter season is past, "the rain over and gone," and sweet gratitude sending forth her melodious notes of thanksgiving and praise, in spiritual songs brought forth by the healing wings of the Sun of Righteousness spreading over you. This is my desire for you, that every afflicting dispensation of infinite wisdom may work for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory in the day to come.

This is lovely weather; may I indulge myself with the pleasing idea, that you are admiring the beauties of nature, and the gifts thus bestowed on man by a great and bountiful Creator, who year by year is showering down His blessings, providing for the animal creation, unto the glory and praise of His wisdom and power, who giveth life and breath to all; asking nothing in return, but the heart of man, that He may dwell therein, and rule and reign there, until every foe is subdued that disturbs the love, peace, and harmony of this wondrous whole, and in the winding up of time, give us an inheritance eternal in the heavens, "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." For this end He is offering

forgiveness unto all for past offences, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, that the things behind may not hinder our pressing forwards towards the mark for the prize.

My dear Friend, it is a very low season with me, but love constrains me to write to thee, that if it should be so with thee thou may'st know that thy brother is living by faith, hoping in the mercy of God through the blood of the everlasting covenant, which quickeneth our souls, not only in an humbling sense of our unworthiness, but also unto the consolations which come through Christ to the weary and heavy laden. And this one thing I do, I labour to get into the silence of all flesh, and there to wait that it may be shewn unto me, how it is with me in His holy sight, craving that He will not let His hand spare, nor His eye pity, until He hath made me what He would have me to be; unto Him and His keeping, I labour to commit body, soul, and spirit, not being over much cast down when Amalek prevails, nor too confident when the word of righteousness appears to be sealed unto me. Full satisfied I am there is but "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism," into the love of God, and as God made of one blood all the families of the earth, so Christ is making of one spirit all the children of heavenly Jerusalem, which is coming down out of Heaven from God. This is a mystery hid from the wise and prudent of this world, but revealed unto the babes and sucklings by the Spirit of Christ, which dwelleth in His children. The evening shadows of life appear to be fast gathering around us; my dear wife is perceptibly growing weaker, and my hearing gets no better. We must labour after patience; but

with thanksgiving I can say, I have not to labour after patience and resignation on this account, for it is already mercifully granted, but the loss of my wife will be a great trial indeed.

With our united dear love, I subscribe myself, thy sincere Friend,

BENJAMIN BISHOP.

——o——

XIX.

To ————

19th of 2nd month, 1844.

I desire to sit with thee in spirit, under the humbling sense of the awful weight resting upon all who apprehend themselves called upon to speak in the name of the Lord, that they neither add to, nor diminish therefrom. And now whilst writing, the encouraging language of the mighty God of Jacob unto poor Jeremiah, has unexpectedly sprung up in my heart, "Say not I am a child, for thou shalt go to all to whom I send thee, and all that I command thee thou shalt speak;" and His word also is, "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, for I am thy God, and I will help thee."

——o——

XX.

To ————

29th of 1st month, 1845.

It is a low season with me. I have lately written to ———— to encourage her to bear up, and now I want bearing up myself. Through the tender mercy of our God, and the day-spring from on high which

hath visited my soul, I seem to abound in a good degree to a dominion over many evils that are in the world; and when the love of God prevails over all within me I have a peaceable habitation, a sure dwelling, and a quiet resting place. But for all this there is a something left unconquered, and though through holy aid I have often bruised his head, yet again he tears and bruises my heel; it is of the flesh, and I can plainly see, so long as anything of the flesh is alive in me, there will be a lodging-place for Satan. And now my dear friend, if I who have been brought up from the lowest hell, and have in possession, by promise of the word of God, all that my soul desireth, and yet have thus to war and fight, to watch and pray, or become a castaway, ought I not to feel deeply for my fellow-creatures, who are sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, carried away captive by the devil at his will? Thou knowest, my dear friend, I do feel a little, but my burden is greater than I can bear alone; and as thou, and all whose faces are turned towards Zion, are as dear to me as my own soul, I believe I may, in that liberty we have in Christ Jesus, pour it out into thy bosom. It does appear to me that the call of the Lord is going forth, and will go forth louder and louder through His church, in the words of the 50th Psalm, verses 5 and 6, "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness, for God is judge himself." Hath not the Lord already called, and is calling His servants, to go as unto the highways and hedges, to draw them by the compelling cords of His love to come unto His supper; and God Himself is the only judge, when to send, and whom to

gather. And whilst my heart rejoiceth in all this; for this is the first step, (I mean to call them with the drawing cords of love,) yet there appears to be something further, to see that they put on the wedding garment before they go in, or they will assuredly be rejected; but who is sufficient for these things? And now is brought to my remembrance the word of the Lord to me some years since, "Go softly, lest thou wake the children." I have gone softly many years, washing my face, and anointing my head, whilst inwardly I have been clothed with sackcloth, mourning and weeping over the desolations of our Society, and now I am ready to think it is time to touch some of the strongest of the children and wake them up. The Lord is sufficient for his own work. Now we believe that the Lord will gather by those whom He hath gathered; these must stand still as servants in waiting, and follow Him whithersoever He leads them, and He will lead these according to their several gifts, in perfect order and harmony, to His own glory. Now the Lord hath given the word, and great is the company of those that are publishing it. Our first Friends were born of the incorruptible Seed of God, they were baptized by one Spirit into one body, and counted nothing too near or too dear to part with for the Lord's sake. They laid the axe to the root of the corrupt tree. They slew both on the right hand and on the left, and put to flight the armies of the aliens, for the Lord God was their King, their Lawgiver, and their Judge, and He brought them through fire and through water; but they delivered neither son nor daughter, they only delivered their own souls by their righteousness; for though they had children of the flesh, yet

these were not children of the Spirit, until they were born of the same Holy Spirit. Thus it was in the morning of our day, with those that were born of God; being created anew by Christ Jesus unto good works, they became as a "city set on a hill," and meetings for worship and discipline were set up among them, by the Spirit, power, and wisdom of God; and for a season Truth reigned over all disorderly spirits, for their rock was the inward revelation, light, and power of God in their souls, being "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone."

——o——

XXI.

To Joseph A. Gillett.

29th of 7th month, 1845.

It is truly comforting to a soul wading in the deeps, to feel the sympathy and unity of a fellow traveller towards the rest and kingdom of God. This is a day for all who have made a covenant with the Lord by sacrifice to gather unto the anointing within them, and often to speak one unto another that there may be no schism in the church, and every man may be prepared for the task assigned him in harmony and love. . . . . I am aware of the startling question, "Who is sufficient for these things?" God is sufficient for His own work. Christ hath not died in vain, neither have we believed in vain. I could write much on the state of the poor, but at present I forbear; for their sakes I feel thankful that I am poor. When young I did nearly all I could do as

a man to become rich, but could not, for the hand of the Lord was against me, for my violence to convictions. I am the man that had been wounded almost to death, when one whom I knew not before as a Saviour, took compassion on me and made a covenant with me; through Him I am in a manner rich, though without the burden of wealth, having none of my own, and yet wanting nothing. Unity in the faith is a very precious thing; our strength consists in it.

With dear love to thyself and your circle, thy sincere Friend,

BENJAMIN BISHOP.

—o—

XXII.

To J. A. G.

Strood, 13th of 9th Month, 1845.

My very dear Friend.—Seeing the great Head of the Church was pleased to draw thy spirit into sympathy and travail with mine, and through thy obedience in the simplicity of a little child, the way was made clear before me to accept the offer of the fellowship of thy spirit, in discharging myself of a debt of gospel love I owe to my poor neighbours, I feel bound in the renewed springings thereof to salute thee as a brother beloved, and to acquaint thee how it fares with me towards the objects of our earnest solicitude after so long a lapse of time. As we had both to acknowledge that it was "the Lord's doing and marvellous in our eyes" that our hearts were united in this labour, so I have still to

acknowledge the continuation of His marvellous loving-kindness, His mercy, and His truth to me, and which I feel persuaded flows also towards all the human race, giving unto every one according to his works; that either by loving-kindness and tender mercy, or by judgments, He may draw every one unto the measure of grace in his own heart, that all may hear and obey, and come unto the baptism of His well-beloved Son, and know His blood *without* them and *within* them to cleanse them from all sin. Now God the Father of all hath made His Son Jesus Christ Lord of all, and put all things under His feet, and given Him to be the head of the Church, through whose quickening Spirit we live unto God through faith in His requirings and in the revelation of His Holy Spirit within us. His eyes are going to and fro throughout the earth to shew himself strong in behalf of those whose hearts are perfect towards Him. Truly, my dear Friend, there is great cause for those to rejoice in Him whose hearts trust in Him. My soul feels humbled before Him to this present day in remembrance of His mercy and of His truth to me, and also in the gracious fulfilment of His word to my soul, when it was labouring for clearness in the united travail of our spirits, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." I mention it now for thy encouragement, that thou mayest trust in the Lord's openings at all times, walking in His holy Light, whithersoever He leads thee.

Considering my infirmities, I may not have much to do for His adorable name but to sympathize with the afflicted, but the Great Head of the Church may have various fields of labour for thee, and I have

believed that our little labour of love was intended for our strength and encouragement as well as for those we visited. The trials and discouragements we met with at the onset; the secret power which attended us throughout in my extreme weakness; the precious unity I felt with thy spirit; and the peaceful close we were favored to make; the quiet resting place which my spirit sensibly feels; all proclaim His wisdom, power, and love. And now with respect to my feelings towards my poorer neighbours, I feel the gracious promise fulfilled, "I will give thee rest;" for whilst my heart continues to flow towards them in the drawings of our Heavenly Father's love, and to sympathize with them under their various temptations and accumulating distresses, through the Prince of darkness who reigns over them, I feel peace in leaving them unto Him whose mercies are over all His works, being satisfied that His servants without Him can do nothing. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God," "Who maketh the clouds His chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind!" What is man that He should take account of him? Doth He not visit and re-visit? Were it not for His adorable name and unutterable mercy, where would some of us be, to whom He hath often manifested Himself "as the clear shining after rain." "To whom much is given, of him much will be required;" and truly we can give Him nothing but what He first gave us. And now words fail to express the raptures of my soul in the contemplation of the wonderful love of God in the gift of His only beloved Son, even unto death, for the sins of the whole world. I am a believer in the words of the Apostle Paul—that

nothing without us will be able to separate us from the love of Christ, and that all the trials and temptations of this life are not worthy to be compared to the glory which is at seasons revealed in us. Speak, ye who have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice, and whose feet have through Him stood firm in the bottom of Jordan, and who have brought up stones of memorial from thence, is there any joy comparable to the joy of God's salvation? Is there anything too near or too dear to part with for His sake, who asks, that He may give in this life an hundred fold, and in the world to come life everlasting; yea, eternal joy, no doubt beyond the power given to finite man to conceive? My heart salutes thee and all thine in the love of the Gospel of life, peace, and salvation; and my spirit rejoiceth with yours in the hope of the glory of God, through faith which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. May we for ever be each others joy and rejoicing in the Lord, is the prayer of thy sincere little Friend,

BENJAMIN BISHOP.

——o——

XXIII.

To ————

17th of 9th month, 1845.

I write to manifest my affectionate remembrance of you all, desiring for you all, as well as for myself, a steadfast abiding in the light of the Lord, which assures a fellowship with the Father and with the Son, and one with another. I have but little to inform you respecting our outward affairs, which to me evidently appear to be in the hands of Him who

doeth all things well; we know but little variation, neither do I know that I have a wish, or an anxious care about them. In meditating on our outward blessings I am often led sweetly, thankfully, to query "Who made thee to differ?" For plainly I know who made me to differ, and that it is of His mercy alone that "I taste those gifts with joy." But inwardly I do not live under this serene sky; many are the changes my soul passes through, and that oftener than the returning day, and this I find also to be good for me; for who can look up to God for the *blessings* and precious *consolations* of the Gospel without being willing to be a partaker of the afflictions of it also? And who can turn away from the bitter cup, when we remember how largely our holy and ever blessed Redeemer drank thereof for our sakes?

I think I gave thee in my last some account of the little labour in which J. A. G. and myself have been engaged, since which I have felt greatly relieved of the exercise of my spirit, and have had sweet peace. I was helped with a little help from the Sanctuary in returning my minute, and a precious covering I thought was over the meeting. Yet I have not wholly lost sight of reading and instructive conversation with those among the poor that have an ear to hear, which this, our visit, may open a door for, feeling now perfectly at liberty to exercise myself in this way; but there is much to suffer and endure, patience must have her perfect work. Some hesitate; some are too forward. I intend to visit a poor man this evening with whom we met, and will give thee a brief account of him. Through a blow received from a vessel coming to the wharf,

the spine was hurt, and he is unable to move his lower limbs, and is otherwise afflicted, besides being so deaf that he keeps a slate by him for communicating with those around. I was struck with love and awe to find so heavenly-minded a man. He said he had not one pain too many, his deafness was more a blessing than an affliction. To live or to die, he had no will of his own, Christ's will was his. His prayer was to be with Him, and to know more of Him, and to be made more like Him.

It is probable thou hast been looking for a letter from me, my dear Friend, earlier. I have been thinking of thee; but in gathering up the fragments, such have been the precious incomes of heavenly love, that I was fearful of writing much, lest I should exceed or give my strength away; and since, I have been so stripped and poor, more particularly in meetings, sometimes even to distress. I have written now and then a letter, and that in great weakness. I feel it a weighty thing to know the God of Jacob to be my help and my shield. Were not His mercies great, I must sink under a sense of my unworthiness to look up unto Him in times of trouble, but so it is, "He prevents me with the blessings of goodness," and does not mark all mine iniquities. Who can utter His marvellous loving-kindnesses; who can shew forth all His praise? He is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works.

It will be pleasant to hear of your welfare. I sometimes come and sit with you in spirit, and my heart overflows with thanksgiving and praise unto the Author of all our mercies, on your behalf, believing He will teach you, and guide you with His eye, and preserve you unto His heavenly kingdom.

XXIV.

To ————

12th month, 1845.

Thy letter was seasonable and valuable unto me, who am unworthy of the least of all the Lord's mercies; but so it is, the Lord doth think of me, and putteth it in the hearts of those that love Him, to think of me also, so that our blessings abound, both spiritually and temporally. Words are insufficient to set forth the gracious dealings of my God to me; His loving-kindness and tender mercies over all my weakness and fears. The enemy is, indeed, very near, and very troublesome, but there are seasons where He who is omnipotent reigneth over all. I speak of His righteousness, even of His only, for surely I am of myself more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I am lost in wonder, love and praise; and fully persuaded I am, that all that will come, may come, and know the Lord Jesus, to be made unto them of God, wisdom, and sanctification, and redemption. When thy salutation reached me, I was under some conflict of spirit because of the adversaries, but in Christ Jesus, we do rejoice, and in Him we will exceedingly rejoice; and whatsoever he saith unto us, let us do it. My heart rejoiceth and my tongue sings for joy, in believing that glory inconceivable to man, awaits the Church; but she hath a baptism to be baptized with, and how is she straitened until it be accomplished.

It is very pleasant to hear that ———— has had a valuable letter from ————. It is no new thing

for "deep to call unto deep," at the noise of the Lord's waterspouts; and whilst with thee, my prayer to God is, that all His baptized servants may be preserved far from a party spirit, I earnestly crave that they may know a patient waiting for His Word, and a faithful surrendering of themselves unto His blessed will in all things. I trust I feel for, and with our deeply tried friend, and hope that ———— has been enabled to send him a present of the fruits of the land, "a little honey, a little balm, and a few spices," that may prove cordial and healing to his wounded spirit. I cannot say whether the Lord's time is fully come to turn His hand upon us, to purely purge away our dross, and take away all our tin, but I believe that He is preparing instruments among us, by, and in whom, if they are faithful, He will arise, and shake, not the earth only, but also heaven; and with fear and trembling, my spirit is striving to say, "even so, come, Lord Jesus," until there is nothing remaining but that which cannot be shaken.

———o———

XXV.

To ————

10th of 1st month, 1846.

I feel not only unworthy but incapable also of entering into that sympathy with thee, which the contents of thine seem to call for, from a brother in travail of spirit for the promotion of truth and righteousness in the earth. My spirit can answer, Amen, to thine, in believing that not a finger must

be put to the shaking ark, unbidden. But I would not have thee be at all discouraged because all do not see alike that love the Lord in sincerity; for by these things, the faith, the wisdom, and patience of the saints are brought into exercise and proved. God seeth the spring and motive of the action, and regards the first more than the last, and as the eye is kept single, and the ear open to the precious admonitions of the Holy Spirit, we shall all be gently and safely led on, until we all see eye to eye, and know that union which Christ prayed for, "that those whom Thou hast given me, may be one, as we are one." And it appears sealed upon my spirit, that this oneness of heart and soul, with a unity in the faith, is the first and principal thing that must be laboured for by the baptized servants and handmaids of our Lord; and that they must take heed to their own spirits, and keep their own hearts with all diligence, that they may be prepared, either to stand with the Lamb upon Mount Zion, or to follow Him whithersoever He goeth; and in quietness and confidence shall be the strength of these. I believe that deliverance to the wrestling seed of Jacob will be wrought through an inward travail of soul before the Lord. Israel was as perfectly safe when in their tents under the cloudy pillar, as when it was taken up, and they marching towards the promised land. My dear Friend, I could write of weaknesses, of unworthiness, of ignorance, and of blushings and confusion of face; but I leave all this to God, and feel great peace in being willing to appear as a fool. One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after, that I may have fellowship with them that walk in the Light. May

these stand as servants in waiting for their Lord, with their loins girded, and their lamps burning, keeping their habitations in the Light, then their dwelling will be safe. I am unable to express what I feel on behalf of the wrestling seed of Jacob. My heart's desire and prayer to God is that He will not suffer them to be dismayed; and fully persuaded I am, that nothing without us can harm us, so long as Christ Jesus is within us.

——o——

XXVI.

To ————

29th of 4th month, 1846.

Thy truly consoling salutation of affectionate and Gospel love I received this morning, and my heart unites with thine in ascribing honor, thanksgiving, and praise, unto Him whose tender mercies are over all His works. The words are forcibly with me, "Except I wash thee thou hast no part with me." The mercy and loving-kindness of the Lord in this outward afflicting dispensation of His unerring wisdom, is unutterable unto me, who am of myself altogether filthy, and unworthy of the least of all His mercies. Yea, my endeared Friend, I feel unworthy to utter that precious peace and solemnity which is the portion of my cup from the hand of the Lord. My dear wife is borne up surprisingly, and her patient resignation is an evident token of divine support.

XXVII.

To John Dunstone.

13th of 5th month, 1846.

My very dear Friend.—Thine of the 6th inst. I duly received, and it was most seasonable and savoury to my taste, such as my soul loveth; and in that love in which it was indicted, doth my heart salute thee, and respond to thy faith in, and testimony to the love and power of redeeming grace in Christ Jesus our Lord, and in the faith of Him. We are brothers in tribulation, unknown in the flesh, but well-known in the Spirit, in watchings, in fastings, and in prayer, in which we are companions and fellow travellers towards the rest and kingdom of God. And through redeeming love, we are able to sing together of mercy, and of judgment; "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort us." Thine to me speaks strongly in the words of the Psalmist, "Come and magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together;" and my heart responds unto God, "Open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise." I have said we are brothers, companions and fellow travellers together unto the rest and kingdom of God: this we are on our own behalf, having met together in spirit by the way, we have passed through many similar outward afflictions and inward conflicts of spirit. Now let us also be brothers and companions on behalf of the church in watchings, in fastings, and in prayer; and when the Lord, by the Spirit of judgment and of burning, hath purified His Church from all her dross, taken away all her tin and reprobate silver, then shall she again look forth as the morning, "clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as any army with banners."

Our religious Society has fallen from its first love, and the fire of the Lord's jealousy is kindled amongst us: and woe unto them that are covering with a covering but not of the Lord's Spirit, unless they repent and humble themselves under His mighty hand. The Lord is gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy; "His reward is with Him, and His work before Him." The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and "He knoweth them that are His;" and His eyes are running "to and fro throughout the earth, to shew Himself strong on the behalf of them whose hearts are perfect towards Him." Many of us are now preparing to attend our Yearly Meeting, to look into the state of things amongst us, and we know not what may befall us there. May our Lord be gracious unto us, and may our God, who satisfieth the longing soul and filleth the hungry with good things, condescend to be our Head, our Helper, and our Shield. And may'st thou, my dear friend, help the suffering Seed by fasting and prayer, that Amalek prevail not; yea, saith my soul, may all who know the Lord cry mightily unto Him day and night, that He will not suffer His hand to spare, nor His eye pity, until He hath made Jerusalem the joy of the whole earth.

My dear wife, of whom thou so tenderly enquires, is going on far beyond all our expectations; her patience and resignation are consoling to all who attend upon her. I must strive against being too sanguine, but I think there is great hope of her being spared to me a little longer. In all our afflictions we are mercifully regarded from on high. I am often very nicely, at other times very weak, and thus I am carried on from one day to another,

desiring to cast all my care on Him who careth for us. I sympathize with thee and thy dear wife under your bodily afflictions, but thanks be unto God, who comforteth us in all our tribulations, and who will preserve all His humbly dependent children unto His heavenly kingdom; unto whom, with the Son of His love, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, be ascribed all honor and glory, thanksgiving and renown, saith my soul. Amen.

——o——

XXVIII.

To ————

6th month, 1846.

How wonderful is the love of God! It is high, we cannot attain unto it, but we are helped with a little help from his Sanctuary to behold a part, and the nearer we approach infinite purity, the clearer the vision, and the fuller the enjoyment, until all things become as dross and as dung in comparison with the knowledge of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ. O my spirit feels that God is love, and that all His fatherly chastisements are in love unutterable; let all His works praise Him, in the heights and in the depths.

——o——

XXIX.

To ————

1st month, 1847.

Oh my Friend, what can be done to draw the people unto heavenly love? It would soon do away with all the wretchedness that there is in the world.

What can we do better than to suffer it to purify us from all filthiness of spirit, as well as flesh? May we wait upon God to know His will concerning us, for without Christ we can do nothing. And blessed be His holy name, He hath preserved a little living remnant in this our day, who do know their salvation to be come. I hope these broken sentences will do no harm. I believe it is well for us to get together in spirit, that we may feel our fellowship one with another, to be in the Lord. I seem not to doubt, but thou, with myself, and many others, art crying, "my leanness, my leanness!" Well, my dear friend, the kingdom is promised to the poor in spirit, and there are exceeding great and precious promises to those that wait upon the Lord. He is gracious; He considereth our frame; He remembers that we are dust, and He hears the desire of the humble.

BENJAMIN BISHOP.

—o—

XXX.

To J. A. G.

13th of 5th month, 1847.

Through adorable mercy He who is higher than the highest regards me, filling my soul with love to the whole human family, and though I am outwardly as an empty vessel at the side of the house, yet the increase of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ in the hearts of the people, is my chief joy. "The meek the Lord guides in judgment, and the meek He teaches His way." "Beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings,

that publisheth peace, that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth." And perhaps never more beautiful in the eyes of the Lord, than when they are in the deeps out of human sight, when wave upon wave, and billow after billow almost make shipwreck of faith; then it is that we see the wonders of the Lord, and from thence it is that we are strengthened to proclaim unto Zion, "Thy God reigneth." And that all the wrestling seed of Jacob may reign with Christ upon earth until all their enemies are subjected, and put under their feet by the Spirit of our God, is my fervent prayer.

——o——

XXXI.

To ————

Stockport, 11th of 6th month, 1847.

I may say that I am a worm and no man; so that while I feel incapable of doing any good, I strive to do no harm, striving to leave each day's work until the day comes. Poverty of spirit and peace of mind is my favoured portion. When I look at our manner of publicly assembling ourselves together to worship God, I am often ready to cry, "my leanness, my leanness!" How shall I present myself before the Lord? O! for a more watchful, humble frame of spirit out of meetings; then would His life-giving presence be more eminently witnessed in meetings, and the Lord would make many amongst us lively branches, bringing forth fruit unto the praise of His grace. O! there wants nothing but a total surrender of our wills to His holy and blessed will. His hand is full of blessings; I find it so.

XXXII.

6th of 7th month, 1847.

One thing have I desired, that will I seek after, that I may always be in my right place, doing the right thing. As I am deprived of my books whilst here, I have much time for inward retiredness of spirit, which I feel to need more than books. My hearing is not perfect, though better than it has been, and my memory fails much in temporals, so that I seem to myself to be of no use in the creation. The travail of my soul grows stronger and stronger that all the inhabitants of the world were as happy as myself. The longer I stay here, the more I am brought into sympathy with the suffering Seed of Christ hereaway, without at all lessening the duties I owe to my dear Kent friends; and the cravings of my soul are for us all, that we may more and more put on the Lord Jesus, until in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the love of God, we bring forth fruits unto holiness, unto the praise and glory of the Father and the Son. Small as we are among the valleys, and low as the life of vital religion is amongst us, yet the unbelieving know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither do they consider that He is God of the valleys as well as God of the hills, and He has enabled a small army to put to flight the host of the Assyrians which filled the country.

XXXIII.

To ———

12th month, 1847.

My beloved Friend,—whom I love in the Truth, and for the Truth's sake: grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father, and from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, be multiplied unto all that love the Truth, and walk therein, to the praise of the glory of His grace, whereby and wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. Worthy, saith my soul, is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessings! My soul travails for the fulfilling of that vision which John saw, when he heard "every creature that is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, saying, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever!" And what hinders the coming of the kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ? Is there weakness in Him? Do His exceeding great and precious promises in Christ Jesus our Lord fail towards the children of men? Nay; blessed, praised, and magnified over all the powers of darkness, be the ever adorable name of Israel's Shepherd, the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, who is in His children of Light, and by His grace will work in them, through them, by them, and upon them, until the beast, the false prophet, and the whore is taken and no Canaanite be found in the house of the Lord. True it is that the Jews were taken captives out of their land which the Lord had

given them to have inherited for ever; and every visible Church of Christ under the glorious gospel dispensation, hath to the present day been taken out of their inheritance in Christ by the combined powers of darkness, the beast and the false prophet. These have robbed every visible Church, so that they can no more see Christ coming unto them in His inward and spiritual appearing, than the Jews could see Him in the days of His flesh. And in all, and by all that are under Egyptian darkness, Christ is persecuted and crucified in His second coming without sin unto salvation, as in the days of His flesh, He was rejected by some who professed to believe in Moses and the prophets. "But the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His!"

My soul travails for the whole creation of God, it mourns under the hard unbelieving hearts of men, and it rejoiceth in the wonderful and inconceivable love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. And seeing that a measure of the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is offered to every man, sufficient to make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light, from whence cometh this unbelief in Christ and God, and the hardness of men's hearts against the offer of His love and mercy? We read that the angels' not keeping their first estate, was the primary cause of our first parents being deceived. They fell likewise and fled from the voice of God, but God sought them and found them, and had compassion on them, and though they had lost their innocency and become dead to God, yet he promised them a Seed that should bruise the head of the serpent. And all that by faith live in Christ, the Seed of God's promise,

by which they overcome the wicked one, are brought up again into the paradise of God. But some of these also have left their habitations in the Truth, and fallen through their own hearts lusting after forbidden things; and these are the greatest enemies on earth against the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

Our Society is mixing with the people, and strangers are devouring our strength. Yet there is a little living remnant sighing and crying to the Lord because of these things.

I do hope, trust, and pray, that the Lord will hasten the day when he will purely purge away the dross by the Spirit of judgment and burning, and take away all the tin, and restore judges as at the first and counsellors as at the beginning—that the mountain of the Lord's house may be established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, and that all nations may flow unto it. And then this song will be sung in our land, "This is our God, we have waited for Him, He will save us: this is the Lord, we have waited for Him, we will rejoice and be glad in His salvation." And now, my dear Friend, I have written much, and perhaps to but little purpose, being pretty much to the same effect as that I have written thee before, but Pharaoh's dreams were doubled unto him because the thing was certain.

BENJAMIN BISHOP.

———o———

XXXIV.

To ————

5th month, 1848.

The more perfect we are in love, the more the grace of the God of love will be seen about and

among us; until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, in whom is no death. The apostle Paul, when a strong man in the Lord, had to feel his weakness; and he was glad in being made sensible that he could do nothing of himself, that the power of Christ might rest upon him. Great and marvellous are the works of the Lord, and His judgments are a great deep. "He hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet;" and blessed, for ever blessed, will they be that stand still, until all that the Lord maketh to pass on before Him are gone by, and the still small voice is heard where to go, and what to do. Some formerly were commanded to keep a little way behind the ark, because the way which they had to go, they had not gone before. I want to see our Society, (professing as we do to be led by the Spirit of Truth,) become members of Christ's mystical body, feeding only on the true bread which cometh down from God out of heaven, that the Lord may be the strength of our hearts, and our portion for ever.

It is only when the Lord is exalted in judgment, and God that is holy, sanctified in righteousness, that the lambs can feed after their manner. Are there not many in our Society, who have been quickened unto God by His Word in their hearts in early life, but by not taking heed thereto are become like dry bones, without spiritual flesh and sinews? But O! how encouraging to the Lord's baptized servants to labour in the little strength afforded, is the assurance that even these dry bones can be brought forth unto life and usefulness by the power of God, if they will but hear the voice of Christ in

the day of His shaking and visitation. O! let us seek a close and closer fellowship with the Father in the Son, and one with another in Christ our holy Redeemer, Mediator, and ever-blessed Saviour, and we need not fear what man can do unto us.

——o——

XXXV.

14th of 10th month, 1848.

My frame is altogether very weak, so that I am much confined to the house, and through adorable mercy, feeling no burden upon my spirit. I am looking towards going to our everlasting home, bounded by "not my will, but thine be done." My deafness increases very much. All about me feel the loss of my hearing, and think it makes me dull, except my wife, but it does not.

——o——

XXXVI.

To ————

2nd month, 1849.

What shall I say to thee, and how pour comfort into thy wounded soul? The enemy of all good is taking advantage of your distressed circumstances, to drive thee to despair. I sorrow with you both; and it brings to remembrance the days of my affliction, the wormwood and the gall which I have

tasted. Thus it is God "wounds to heal, and kills to make alive:" yet, in our greatest distress, "considereth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust;" making our extremity His opportunity, to teach us wisdom and the fear of the Lord. Thou acknowledges that thou art in a tempted state, which is an evidence that the Lord is near, for it is the Spirit of Christ that shews thee this, and if His Spirit is followed in all its leadings, He will bring thee through and over all thy conflicts, trials, and difficulties, and freely give thee an inheritance among all them that are sanctified. But wilt not thou say how can these things be? I answer, by trusting in the Lord with all thine heart, giving up thy own understanding, thy own will; having trusted to thy own understanding, thou hast found it to fail; so it will be thy wisdom to lean to it no longer. Now listen to the admonition of a tender father, who hath walked through (something like) the valley of the shadow of death—who hath doubted of ever being able to lay hold of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, unto life eternal; and thus it is with thee; but now stand still, and gather up the fragments that remain of the precious visitations of the love of God to thy never-dying soul, from thy youth up. Let the reproofs of instruction have their proper place and weight in thy mind. Give Him the reins, and let Him be the leader and thou the follower, then thou shalt know the Lord to be thy Saviour, a very present help in every time of trouble, and that in faithfulness He hath afflicted thee. His fatherly chastisements have not been for thy destruction, but for thy profit. These things are foolishness to the wise and prudent in their own sight, but as thou hast proved thy own

understanding, so now prove that which man despiseth, the gentle checks of the true witness of God, and thou wilt find hard things to be made easy, and bitter things sweet. Strength will be given thee to bear every trial with patience, until the Lord saith "It is enough." Number your blessings, and employ them with thanksgiving.

——o——

XXXVII.

To ————

28th of 8th month, 1849.

The love of God, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, is a treasure hid with the Son in the Father, whose commandments are life everlasting. Whosoever eateth His flesh, and drinketh His blood, dwelleth in God, and God in him, by whose power, invisible to the world, every member moves in harmony, to the praise and glory of God the Father, and to the edification and comfort one of another. In this love, according to my measure, my heart salutes the whole family of Christ the world over, hoping and believing, that as the eye is kept single in Christ the head, and the heart steadfast in God, there will be no need of one member's saying to another "I have no need of thee." Great is the mystery of iniquity, but its power is limited, and its kingdom to come to an end, for great and glorious is the mystery of godliness,—the gospel of God working salvation in the earth, through faith which

is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Now we see Satan transformed into an angel of light, and his ministers into the ministers of Christ, and *one* cannot read the book because it is sealed, and *another* cannot read it because he is unlearned; so that the fear of God is taught by the precepts of men! These kindle a fire, and compass themselves about with sparks of their own kindling, being deceived by means of the miracles which the second beast, with horns like a ram, hath power to do: and must receive of the plagues of mystical Babylon, unless they repent and come out of her. But grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, be with all that stand fast in Christ, in whom the whole body fitly framed and joined together, groweth up into a holy temple in the Lord, in which is no schism, nor confusion of tongues; for God is our Father, Christ our salvation, and the Comforter, namely, the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, our guide, our life, and our Light, who searches our hearts, and maketh intercession for us, according to the will of God. O my beloved friend it makes me exceeding joyful in all my tribulations, to walk about this Holy City, to which such glorious promises belong, and in which the excellency of wisdom is so marvellously displayed in the ascent of the house of God; the sitting of His servants, and the fellowship of the Spirit, causing every member to rejoice with them that rejoice, and to weep with them that weep, being of the same mind one towards another. It is with me a Sabbath day, and I love to take a Sabbath day's journey sometimes. We have our railways, and travel very swiftly, but not so swiftly as a glance of the mind. But how can we but grieve when we turn our atten-

tion on the world: we can but weep over the abominations, the cruelty, and oppression that are in the earth, one generation bringing up another in the same darkness and wickedness, deceiving, and being deceived. And when we meditate on the blessed privilege that we as a religious society enjoy,—that of sitting down quietly together to wait upon the Lord for the renewal of our strength,—what cause have we to humble ourselves in His holy sight, for all His mercies past and present, and with upright hearts query, "Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do?" O the beauty and safety of keeping the eye single to the glory of God. I think we do not read of the children of Israel wavering in judgment, when to take their journeys, and when to abide in their tents. Now many are running to and fro, and knowledge is increased. May the God of all grace make the wise to shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.

——o——

XXXVIII.

To ————

1851.

I am much obliged for your information concerning the illness of your dear father; and what shall I say, I *sympathized* with you in the first account, and I *rejoiced* with you in the second. May goodness and mercy follow you all, whilst here, and endue with patient endurance unto the end, striving to love all

His dispensations, knowing that we must all put off this mortal, before we can be perfectly clothed with immortality: and blessed and holy are they that have part in the first resurrection, over such the second death hath no power. My dear love is to your parents, and I pray God to bless them more and more in Himself, and you increasingly in them, and they in you, that when the awful moment of separation from the body comes, the Church triumphant, and the Church militant may sing together new songs, never so perfectly hymned before. Amen.

——o——

XXXIX.

To ————

28th of 7th month, 1851.

My dear Friend.—A few lines revive, which sprang up in my heart when writing to my dear friend, John Dunstone:

> "How sweet to meet a pilgrim in the way,
> With Jesus listening to all we say."

What can such poor weak creatures as we do? We may sometimes say, we cannot hew wood for the fire. This one thing we can do,—we can sit still at the fountain head, grace assisting, until it is unsealed, and then some of us carry water to the labourers that are faint and weary; and if I am not mistaken, there are within your Quarterly Meeting, labourers that can handle the axe, who will yet, at times, be

ready to faint, and have need of the sympathy of their friends, for it is harder work to grub up the corrupt tree, than to cut off the branches, leaving the roots and trunk standing. The Lord direct our hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

——o——

XL.

To ————

1851.

The minute of our last Yearly Meeting, (1850) respecting gravestones, struck me, and I believe many more, with awe, for fear of the day of the Lord that is coming upon us, and trembling has taken hold of me in the day of trouble. Is it not time to sound an alarm in the Lord's holy mountain, to gather His saints unto Him, those that have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice? It is not a lion that is come up against us, then might his roaring have made us afraid, but it is a subtle, twisting, twining serpent, hiding himself in the grass. O my beloved Friends, you who have made a covenant with the Lord by sacrifice, "lift up your voices like a trumpet, cry aloud, shew the Lord's people their transgressions, and the house of Israel their sins." May every one know the place where to wait, even to attend at wisdom's gate, and see that their eye be single to the glory of God, and in His holy fear and light, watch and wait until the cloudy pillar is taken up, and the light shines upon the path whither we

must go. O how precious is it to participate together in the life which is hid with Christ in God, being quickened by His grace, and sprinkled with His blood, thus travelling together in spirit unto the rest and kingdom of God. I am one of the least in our heavenly Father's house, and willing to be so, if I can but behold the beauty of the Lord, in His attributes of mercy and wonderful loving-kindness unto His erring creature man, and enquire in His temple "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?" In Jesus Christ we are one, and all members one of another; and as the blood flows from the heart through hidden channels to every member of the body, so doth the love of God, from Christ the Fountain, flow to every member of His church; which, if interrupted in its course, giveth pain in that particular part, and the members are thereby more or less disqualified for performing their several offices. Wonderful is the condescending love of God to man in Christ Jesus our Lord, who for our sakes humbled Himself unto the death of the cross. And His ministers must put on the Lord Jesus, even to the death of His cross; then will they rise in the likeness of His resurrection, ministering life to every quickened soul, giving milk to babes, and meat to them of riper age, "deep calling unto deep," at the noise of the Lord's waterspouts. This is a mystery hidden from the penetrating of human wisdom, but revealed unto the Lord's babes; and great and glorious it is in the eyes of all those that have pleasure therein. While I could wish "that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain" of the Lord's people, my heart rejoiceth in believing that the

kingdom of our Lord is advancing in the hearts of the children of men, and many will be gathered unto Christ, and sit down "under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and none will be able to make them afraid." I do believe the power of the Lord will arise in our Society; and as the feet of His ministers are much turned unto the highways and hedges, so there will be in the Lord's time a gathering unto the power of the Word, and the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ will be exalted. O for those who have early enlisted under the banner of the Captain of our salvation! May the fathers and mothers of the Israel of God, in this our day, be guided by the wisdom of Truth in carrying such in their arms, that they may grow up as plants of the Lord in their youth, and as corner stones polished after the similitude of a palace, and members of that glorious church that has neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing. Whilst I desire thus for our youth, I also desire for the aged, that our love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment. I write not as one who has already attained, but as labouring to attain, rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God; and with them that labour in the same hope, I am almost ready to say, my heart is continually bowed with thanksgiving and praise to the Author of all our mercies for the many blessings showered upon me by the members of His church militant. The language of my spirit often is, "Why to me? Why to me?" I feel afraid of my own heart lest selfishness should get mixed with these heavenly feelings of gratitude.

XLI.

To———

9th of 9th month, 1851.

My dear Friend.—I feel as though I need not hesitate in replying to thy consoling letter. What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits towards me? Praise ye Him, with me, in the heights, praise Him in the depths, and let all the seed of Jacob glorify Him, saith my soul, with yours; yea, blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things, and blessed be His glorious name, for ever and ever, and let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen! Now leaving unto Christ our unworthiness and weakness, and all the infirmities of the flesh, we will get unto our watch, and stand upon the tower, and there we will watch to see what the Lord our God shall say unto us; and as for His reproofs, we love them; for we are sure, if we open to His knocks, let Him in, and hearken to His voice, He will give us "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." As the secret of the Lord is with the righteous, the Lord requires it of them, that they should keep His secrets; dwelling in their tents, when the cloud is resting on the tabernacle, and when it is taken up, following it whithersoever it goes. Though I am unworthy of the least of all the Lord's mercies, yet Jesus hath begotten in me a travail of soul, not for our Society only, but for all the inhabitants of the earth, that they might be saved. How the Lord will bring about His act, His strange act, I know not, neither desire

to know; one thing I desire of God, that will I seek after—that I may have fellowship with Him, and with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, through sanctification of the Spirit, and redemption which is in Him. Though I am indeed small, and it may be of many, despised, yet my soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour: for He hath not only brought me up from the depths of the earth, but He hath also delivered me from the lowest hell. He found me in a waste howling wilderness, where there was no way. He led me about; He instructed me; He taught me to go, holding me by my arms; and now by the streams of water He is guiding me! The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, in Him I have a goodly heritage. And now, can I do otherwise than mourn in secret for those that are out of the way, whose minds the god of this world hath blinded, lest the light of the glorious gospel should shine unto them; and in my watchings, by the eye of faith, I see a precious remnant of such mourners, "weeping in secret for the abomination which maketh desolate."

——o——

XLII.

To ————

16th of 9th month, 1851.

Dear ————, whom I love in the Truth, and to the beloved of the Lord, being blessed with peace on every side, through faith in the mercy of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, I feel drawn in

Gospel love to communicate with thee, on that which I most of all desire, viz:—that the light of life, which is now shining in darkness, may shine out of darkness throughout Zion, the perfection of beauty, that the Gentiles may come to her light, and all kings to the brightness of her rising; and who is he that will say, the time for the Lord's house to be built, is not come? The mighty God, even the Lord, is calling the earth by His Son, Christ, from the rising of the sun, to the going down thereof, and in a special manner to His saints, who have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice, to gather unto the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, that they may follow Him whithersoever He goeth. These two things are certain, they that have heard the voice of Christ and believe not, are not His sheep, and whosoever taketh not up his cross and followeth Him not, cannot be His disciple. In the outward court, "the Light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." "They have eyes, but they see not; ears have they, but they hear not, neither do they understand with their heart." And such have we been; but they that dwell in the inner courts of the Lord's house, walk in the Light, as Christ is in the Light, and have fellowship with the Father, and with the Son, and one with another in Him; and such may we be, through the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. It is an awful consideration that the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before them that hear and believe not, and the hypocritical professors are the greatest stumbling blocks in the way.

XLIII.

To ———

10th of 11th month, 1851.

A beloved disciple of our blessed Lord wrote, "by this do we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren;" and my heart's desire and prayer to God is, that we consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession Christ Jesus, that we may always bear about in our bodies, His dying, that so His life may be made manifest by us before the eyes of the nations. O my dear friend, how precious it is to feel a dying daily to self, that Christ may reign over all; to those who experience it, the Lord will be a spirit of judgment, when they sit in judgment, and strength to turn the battle to the gate. Be thou strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, for the Lord will make a separation between the precious and the vile; He will have a people to His praise, and He will lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

——o——

XLIV.

To———

5th month, 1852.

I remember the Friend that ——— mentions, and am thankful she is sitting by the springs of waters. I should like her to know so much from me, with my dear love. O how precious is the love of God shed

abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost; and blessed are they that dig down unto the spring thereof, the streams of which make glad the whole city of God. I am shut up, but I see the day approaching when the Bridegroom will come forth out of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet, and many shall be called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb; and the Lord shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness. I know of none so small as myself among the Lord's little ones, and if I may but hew wood, and draw water for such, it is enough, with the peace which I feel in my poverty.

Farewell my dearly beloved friends, in Him who doeth all things well.

——o——

XLV.

To ————

5th of 5th month, 1852.

I am one dwelling in my tent, shut up by infirmities and outward privations, but my spirit is not bound,except by this tenement of clay. I rejoice in the Lord's gracious dealings with me, and through faith I glory in His holy name, who, methinks, I see standing as a Shepherd, calling His scattered sheep together into His fold, to feed in large pastures, and lie down where none can make them afraid. My spirit rejoiceth in beholding by the eye of faith, many seeking the welfare of Zion with their faces thitherward.

XLVI.

To ———

In the love of the gospel and hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, doth my heart salute thee, greatly desiring to be thy companion according to my measure, in bonds and imprisonments, even unto the death of the cross, that the life of Jesus may be manifest in our mortal flesh. As thou wrote in thine, there wants something more than a *will*, to visit the churches of Christ to the edifying of the body in love, through the help of the Great Head thereof; yet when the door is open before us we may enter in to see how our friends fare, "and take their pledge." O the preciousness of that faith, which worketh by love, and comes by Christ! By it the church militant overcomes the world, the flesh, and the devil; and blessed is everyone that hath an eye to see, and an ear to hear, the things that belong unto their peace. Blessed are these, whether in the tent, or in the field, and blessed shall be their basket and their store: blessed shall they be when they come in, and blessed shall they be when they go out. The Lord, which made heaven and earth, will bless His little dependent ones everywhere, and increase them more and more in His love, them and their children. The Lord has arisen, and will arise more and more, by the might of His own power; and He will make them that hate Him flee before Him; He will bind up the broken-hearted, and set the captives free, saying unto Jerusalem thou shalt be built, and to the temple, thy foundation shall be laid: the zeal of the Lord will perform this.

XLVII.

To ———

19th of 3rd month, 1853.

As for myself, I desire to be pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. I am often ready to faint by the way, the hindering things are so many, and my soul's enemies so lively, and strong, and unwearied, and often exulting, that when I am watching on the one hand, they break in on the other; so that not only my earth trembles for fear of the Lord, but my heavens shake also. But this I do, when I present my spirit before the Lord, I bring my omissions and commissions before Him, for I love His judgments, and patiently to wait all the days of my appointed time when I have sinned against Him.

BENJAMIN BISHOP.

———o———

XLVIII.

To ———

28th of 4th month, 1853.

It seems a long time since any communication passed between us; but for every purpose under heaven there is a time and season, and as the branch cannot put forth a bud until the sap ariseth from the root, no more can we be a savour of life unto each other's life without the renewed quickening of

the Spirit of life in us; yet we love to hear of each other's welfare, and to sympathize with each other, as the dispensations of an All-wise Providence pass over us. I rejoice and sympathize with you according to my measure, in all your afflictions and consolations, as ye also do with me. And you will believe me in saying, it is the travail of my soul day and night, for the more perfect shining of the day, when the wise and simple, the rich and the poor, will be each other's joy and rejoicing in the Lord.

The few lines expressive of your unity with me in the faith, are precious to my soul. Praise and thanksgiving often arise to the Author of all our mercies, that there is yet preserved among us a fellowship in the Spirit.

——o——

XLIX.

To ————

30th of 11th month, 1853.

O how I long to see the believers in Christ abounding in love towards each other, and as William Dewsbury said, "ministers and servants built upon the rock of the revelation of the Father and the Son." My love flows to all the wrestling seed of Jacob everywhere. The Lord bless His people with peace, is the prayer of thy sincere, grateful friend,

BENJAMIN BISHOP.

L.

To ———

5th month, 1854.

I unite with you in prayer, that the presence of the holy Head of the church may go with them that go, and stay with those that stay; and which it undoubtedly will, as we continue in watchfulness unto prayer, keeping our habitations in the truth as it is in Jesus; for want of which, many among us are weak in the faith, and the eyes of their understanding become darkened, so that they cannot see the things that belong to their peace; of which, in a letter just read to me, I have a painful instance. I have, however, had a sweet meeting this morning, in which I briefly alluded to the "path which no fowl knoweth," where the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; where no lion or ravenous beast can ever come; and this is my faith, that the just Lord is among us as a people, and He will bring forth His judgments to the light, and overturn, overturn, until there is room for Him to reign, whose right it is. Thy report of your dear father and mother is very pleasing. How sweet is the Scripture which speaketh to this import, "The Lord shall come down upon them that fear Him, as the clear shining after rain." So let us wait upon the Lord, and be of good courage, for He strengtheneth the hearts of all those that trust in Him. I conclude with thanksgiving and praise unto Him, who is able to do far more abundantly for us above all we can ask or think; in whose love and fear, farewell. Your sincere friend,

BENJAMIN BISHOP.

LI.

To ———

I find it is the hardest thing when I am in God to abide in Him. When I sensibly feel His presence, then I can say to my soul, "O satisfied with favour, and full of the blessings of the Lord!" But when He goeth on one of His journeys, and commandeth me to watch and keep the house, then the enemy takes advantage of my weakness. I think G. D. said, "Many who have begun well suffer loss; through mistaking desertion for death, immediately we begin to doubt of that which we formerly have tasted and handled of the precious Word of Life, and are almost ready to cast away our confidence."

——o——

LII.

To ———

11th of 9th month, 1854.

My eye is very painful, and the whole frame weak, yet I count myself happy. All is peace within, and peace without, and we know Him who hath wrought and done much for me, unworthy as I am of the least of all His mercies.

FROM ————, ALLUDING TO A VISIT TO BENJAMIN BISHOP, DURING HIS ILLNESS.

23rd of 11th month, 1854.

I am quite unequal to convey, in this way, an idea of the precious opportunity, of which I have been mercifully favoured to partake this morning, at the bedside of our dear invalid and truly happy friend, Benjamin Bishop. When E. P. told him I was there, he said, "I am very glad; now my dear friends, let us sit in solemn silence." He said, after a sweet pause, "I feel as if I could not depart in peace without telling you of the precious love I feel for all my friends, those in our religious Society, and those out of it, who are looking to Christ. O the love of God is inconceivable. May you give up body, soul, and spirit, into His hands. While the fleshly lusts remain, there will be trouble, but in the meekness and gentleness of the Lamb, there is peace. Our Society has been more favoured than any other in the world, far more; therefore more will be required of it. I never before so fully realised the awfulness of such a state. I can say, No pain of body." To which I added, "and *I* think, *none of mind*." "I can say so too, but I have nothing to spare, not a moment to spare." After another pause, he took off his cap, and seemed engaged in solemn prayer and praises. I could not distinguish all he said, but I clearly heard, "Thou hast taught me to pray, that Thy holy will may be done by me, in me, and through me." Soon after, "'Expressive silence, muse His praise.' I have not words to do it." On my bidding him farewell, he said with earnestness, "My dear friend

I *am* faring well; go, and may the Lord go with thee." "I thank thee, O Lord, that thou didst not take me, until that which was to be done in me is perfected."

——o——

A Letter from John Dunstone to Benjamin Bishop.

The following beautiful letter from a dear blind friend in affliction, to Benjamin Bishop, was dictated to, and transcribed by the late John Budge, who thus adds in the P.S.; "It is really animating and edifying to witness the power and grace of Christ in thus cementing and binding up together as in the bundle of life, those who, in reference to everything else under the sun, are wholly unknown, and strangers to each other. 'I in them, and thou in me, that they may be one in us,' was the language of our blessed Saviour, and to be witnesses of this sublime and precious unity, is indeed, a favour transcending the conception of men."

Camborne, 6th of 7th month, 1841.

My dear friend and brother in the truth, and in tribulation, and in bonds as prisoners of hope, which hope maketh not ashamed, having from time to time experienced the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us. My dear friend, I do most tenderly salute thee in the love of the everlasting gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation to every true believer in Him; and every one that shall receive

the gospel, believe in it, and become faithful to it, shall thereby be enabled to live by it, and shall grow up in it as sweet springing flowers in a well-watered garden: and whoever these may be, or wherever found scattered among the nations, they shall be so many living stones in the spiritual building. These are in a spiritual sense the salt of the earth, the lights of the world, and cities set on a hill that cannot be hid: these let their light so shine before men, that others seeing their good works glorify their Father who is in heaven: these spread a good savour wherever they go, and whether they eat or drink, or whatsoever they do, they endeavour to do all with a single eye to the glory of God, having no confidence in the flesh.

My dear friend, I feel glad in my heart in having this favourable opportunity to inform thee that I both received and heard read, with a degree of thankfulness, thy welcome and cheering letter, which came to me under thy own hand, and as I believe from thy very heart, as it reached the pure Witness not only in my heart, but in the hearts of some others also. It was and is to me as cheering and refreshing as a morsel of bread and a cup of spring water are to a weary traveller, when he is both hungry and thirsty. And besides this, my dear friend, I can assure thee that it afforded me no small comfort to see thee, touching my experience, being an entire stranger to me, hit the work so nicely, and to hear thee read my heart page by page, as though thou hadst seen in the light of the glorious gospel, in a good degree, the whole travail of my spirit: with this I was struck with admiration, to see such a wonderful display of the infinite wisdom of Almighty

God, and I am constrained to think that "flesh and blood have not revealed these things unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven." And now my dear friend, have I not some good ground to believe that for many years that are past, though unknown to each other as to the outward, we have in spirit been travelling on hand in hand together, in that new and living way which is opened by Christ in the gospel, and cast up by the Saviour and friend of sinners? This way is diverse from every other way. Men in the wisdom of this world have sought out many inventions, and have been, and still are, pursuing many ways, contrary to the way of Truth. Have we not seen, my dear friend, in the light of the blessed gospel, which has shined in our hearts, that the Lord our God is one Lord, and the way of Truth one only way? Christ speaking of this way saith, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me;" and the prophet when moved by the Holy Ghost to speak of this way says, "And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein: no lion shall be there." No, no, my dear friend, no lion-like professors shall be found there: they are all lambs redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb of God. "Nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon; it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there; and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." My dear friend,

what an unspeakable favour and matter of thankfulness is this, to be found walking in the way amongst the redeemed ones, and to be numbered amongst the little flock of God, whose good pleasure it is to give them the kingdom; and to be brought off from,—"Lo! here is Christ! and Lo! He is there," and to be gathered home to the fold of Christ, and to sit at the feet of the Saviour, to hear the Good Shepherd's voice, and to learn the sweet and precious lessons of His grace. But, my dear friend, I need not enlarge here; I feel fully persuaded that thou knowest much more of those things than I; therefore I do earnestly desire thee, when it may be well with thee, to think on me, and shew kindness I pray thee, and make mention of me in thy prayers, not to Pharoah, but to the King of glory, for He our God is the King of glory, the King of saints, and of angels too. And now, my dear friend, let us hold out in faith and patience, and struggle on a little longer, and we shall soon come to that blessed city of which it is said, "There shall be no night there," and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear."

As touching my bodily health at the present and for some weeks past, I have been much depressed, and generally confined within doors. I seldom get any sleep in the night season, the cough being troublesome; my breath much affected, and my whole frame being disordered, more by night than by day. I get most of my sleep about the former part or middle of

the day, but I feel thankful, the Holy Spirit of God assisting me, to be enabled to say with Job, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change comes." My dear wife, who has been a faithful sharer with me in all my afflictions, unites with me in sending her dear love both to thee and thine, and if thou hast opportunity to do so, give our united love to our mutual friend, R. B., and to any other friend or friends thou mayst think proper. So, for the present, farewell.

From thy brother in the Truth,

JOHN DUNSTONE.

———o———

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM ————

16th of 4th month, 1855.

Last seventh day evening I had a sweet interview with Benjamin Bishop. He said "I wish my friends to know I am in possession of peace and love. I am almost afraid to say so, so unworthy do I feel, but it is the truth. I can say with Sarah Taylor, I am carried on from day to day, not knowing how the present dispensation may terminate, nor even desiring to know. I have been comparing myself to the man who fell among thieves, I have been so cared for, and sometimes the Master calls upon me." In allusion to the present state of our Society, Benjamin Bishop said, "It is awful, but the Lord is very merciful."

Benjamin Bishop died on the 30th of Fifth Month, 1855, aged 75 years.

——o——

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
3 0112 070606402